

# Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna



# SIGNAL

November 2007 Newsletter

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## UPCOMING SERVICES:

**Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>:** "Inviting the Spirit of Abundance" -- Rev. Linda

This is the week of Divali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, when Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, abundance, and good luck, is made welcome in home and temple. It is also the beginning of this congregation's annual canvass, when we reflect upon how we can contribute to and foster abundance in support of our religious home. Let us celebrate the spirit of abundance, symbolized by Lakshmi, with music and reflection and Indian sweets. Please stay for our Community Sunday lunch. The dedicated collection this month will be for Child Haven (See [www.childhaven.ca](http://www.childhaven.ca)).

**Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>:** Dharma Talk given by Ajahn Sona, Abbott of Birken Forest Monastery near Kamloops. Birken is a forest monastery in the Theravada Buddhist tradition which welcomes guests seeking a peaceful environment for individual practice.

**Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>:** "Who are my People?" -- Rev. Linda - Newcomers to Unitarian\* Universalist congregations often say "I have found my people!" As we welcome the newest Members among us, let us reflect together on how this religious "family" can be our "people," and at the same time affirm that all people are "our people" – and maybe all creatures as well!

If you've considered helping out with the children's program, plan to stay after the service to meet with our RE staff and look at plans for January through June. Themes will be UU values (Principles) and Connecting with the Earth, as well as several holiday sessions.

**Sunday, November 25<sup>th</sup>:** "The Green Movement" -- Presented By the Green Sanctuary Committee - Our Fellowship is embarking on a path to become a greener congregation. We have formed a Green Sanctuary Committee which will present a service of gratitude and wonder, appreciating the beauty of the earth. We will be involving all of our senses, to engage our multi-dimensional congregation with our precious earth. Please come and experience the feel, scent and taste of these gifts and honor the wonder and fragility of our world.

## MINISTER'S MUSINGS:

Some religions see no relationship between the mundane aspects of life and the sacred. They divide the world into two parts. The secular is unholy and sinful by its very nature. Other religions, including ours, see that which is most precious and sacred in the very midst of everyday life. It is always present, if only we are mindful of it. Even when we are handling money!

Is not the fundamental scarcity so many of us feel the perceived scarcity of what is precious -- what gives us life and joy and wholeness? A premise of the Voluntary Simplicity movement is that this vital, life-giving force is within and around us. We are blessed at the heart of our living by the beauty of nature, by our relationships, by our power to create and to relate.

It is in the interests of those who profit from a consumption-oriented society to promote assumptions that we are inadequate as we are. Yet perhaps there something we can learn from the forces of consumerism. Doesn't the market economy say something fundamental about our power -- the power of the decisions we

make about what we do with our resources? True -- it tries to co-opt those decisions -- to influence us to make them in ways which rarely benefit us financially, let alone spiritually. But it recognizes that we do indeed have power. An important aspect of that power is the values we serve with whatever resources available to us.

When we enter into covenant, with a partner, a community, or implicitly with our children by the act of bringing them into the world -- when we enter into covenant values that are precious to us are a "third party" to our commitment. That is what covenant means. Traditionally, that third party has been referred to as God, though it can be imagined other ways as well. Our covenants bind us, yes -- yet paradoxically they also free us -- free us to be more fully what the deepest and best in us wants to be.

"Tithing" is a word we religious liberals shy away from. Yet Lloyd and I recognize that it is very much a spiritual discipline we seek to practice. Oh, its not about a magic figure -- 10% . For some folks, 1% might be a sacrifice. For others -- well, I have one colleague whose spiritual discipline it is to give away 50% of his income. Church sociologists tell us that what average U\*U congregants want from their congregations (including service to the world) takes about 2 ½-3% of our collective income. "Collective" is the operative word -- we are all in different places in our lives, and only you can discern what works for you as an individual.

The discipline is in being mindful of one's values when making financial decisions. True abundance is not in what we keep. It is in what we are able to give away to empower values we hope will shape the future. It is about legacy. It is about making a difference. It is about keeping the energy moving, not freezing it up.

Our survey last May showed a strong commitment to growth, and this congregation is at a critical point in its size-transition where generous support brings exciting results. Insufficient support could mean we miss the moment when the "tide" is poised to carry us toward our goals. We've had a few short-term financial setbacks, like having to evict the tenants in our rental house, as well as an incredible blessing -- the legacy of a house down the road. We hope our canvass this year is fruitful enough to increase the hours of our RE Coordinator so she has time to work with youth. We want to be paying all our staff fair compensation, expand our programs, communications and visibility in the community, and look towards an accessible building someday.

Our shared task is to give flesh to values that nurture life abundant, not only for ourselves, but for all whom we touch. Yes, we are all at different places in our lives. But at any given time, there are only a few of us whose circumstances preclude some level of participation in our gift economy. The gift may be of time or money or talent or all three. Being part of a covenanted community is a spiritual discipline -- and so is what we decide to do with our resources of time, money and talent. The spiritual path is truly about life abundant.

In Faith,  
Rev. Linda

**An important note** -- Did you know the Canadian government will match your contributions to the church nearly dollar for dollar in refunds, if you pay taxes and give more than \$200 a year to all "charities?" When I moved to Canada this astonished me. I'll be pledging about 5% of my income -- knowing the government will give nearly half of that back -- and I'll have it to give to other causes!

### **RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION NOTES FROM REV. LINDA:**

Our Groovin' Green and Yogi Yellow groups are settling in after a "catch as catch can" Fall while the weather still lured us outdoors on weekends. The Yellow group, in particular, has several new participants. Both groups are moving into a world religions focus, while the Yellows continue to explore relationships and the Greens will be working on a holiday social action project for the homeless clients of the Kelowna Drop-In Centre.

Lois and I are grateful for the dedicated leaders who have committed for the fall. If Lois is to be able to take her contractual Sunday a month off, however, we do need a few more committed adults, especially for after December when several of our current leaders will be completing their commitments. The groups will be

moving into the theme of values/UU Principles, and then after Easter into the theme of Connecting with the Earth.

If you have thought at all about becoming part of our “ministry of religious exploration” as leader or aide, we invite you to an RE planning meeting after church on November 18<sup>th</sup>. We will provide childcare and some food to keep us going for an hour or so.

This is the month we are hoping to get some programming off the ground for the (so far hypothetical) Bloomin’ Blues (grade 7 and up). Stay tuned! If you are new and not on our contact list, please give us a call or drop us an e-mail.

Our plan for a Christmas pageant this year is actually a Christmas pageant. It is important to do this every few years to help our children see the Christmas story through a different lens. Our own composer Joyce Poley has written a couple of such pageants. Lois and I have agreed we’ll work from one titled “Would you Like to Hold the Baby?” The primary themes are inclusiveness and the preciousness of new life (everyone is welcome in the stable – the animals, the poor ragged shepherds, the strangers from afar, the little girl who yearns to hold the baby). We’ll be adding some speaking and singing parts, and involve adults as well as children, so do let us know if you are interested in helping out! We’ll meet after church on November 25<sup>th</sup> for informal “casting” and planning. Rehearsals will be after church on December 9 and 16, and dress rehearsal Saturday December 22<sup>nd</sup> for the pageant on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

One last “heads-up” is for the Christmas Gift-making workshop on Sunday afternoon, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. We’ll need volunteers with a simple gift craft they can help children (and others) make in 15 minutes to half an hour, who will staff a table while participants circulate. This is a way of encouraging our values in this over-commercialized season, as well as being creative and having a fun and social time. All ages can participate, and it is a good opportunity for children to bring friends. Contact Carrie B. if you would like to help make this happen!

**Adult Religious Exploration** – Mindfulness Meditation Circle: Mondays, 5:15-6:15 PM. Fourteen people showed up to kick off our new Meditation Circle, co-facilitated by Rev. Linda and Lloyd Horton. There will be some direction for the first few weeks, as some participants are new to meditation. The first ½ hour will include a brief check-in around a question about our own spiritual practices and a period of reflection focussed upon a Buddhist teaching or text. Around 5:45 we will begin meditation: guided, silent, and/or “Metta” (the practice of extending compassion). We will have the option as we continue of lengthening the meditation time. At present, participants are invited to walk the labyrinth afterwards if they wish to do so. This is an open group – everyone is welcome!

#### **“New U” Opportunities:**

1) Join Rev. Linda and several lay leaders over lunch on November 4<sup>th</sup> after church to find out about this congregation’s history and how it “works.”

2) Introduction to U\*U Theology evening: Wednesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 PM. This is a good opportunity for newcomers (and others!) to wrap their minds around the sometimes confusing diversity of theological positions within the Unitarian and Universalist traditions. Rev. Linda would appreciate a call or e-mail if you are planning to come. Watch the list-serve for confirmation that at least 3 people have committed!

#### **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:**

We’re into November! The September retreat at Sorrento Centre is starting to seem like a long time ago. It has been a busy fall. Still, even this long after, I want to write about our **Sacred Earth Connections** retreat.

We often talk about ourselves as a spiritual community, a church family. The September weekend many of us spent at Sorrento exemplifies for me the sweetness and strength of Unitarian community.

I drove to Sorrento early Friday evening in the pouring rain. All the way there I worried about things left undone. Small things like sign-up sheets for workshops, and wiener sticks for our traditional hotdog roast, and if I'd made enough copies of the program. I haven't been a big part of organizing the retreat before and I didn't know how good it would feel to ask people for help and have them willingly and even enthusiastically pitch in. I asked for help finding wood, and wiener sticks, and extension cords, and keys. I asked for help lighting fires, moving chairs, setting up and cleaning up snacks and coffee. Everyone helped.

I found the weekend to be rich with interesting activities, interesting people, and kindly cooperation. I have images of workshops out on the lawns in one of the beautiful sunny breaks; circle dancing in the kekuli (the covered but open sided space where we had our campfires) which gave us a beautiful view of sunlight slanting through the rain; singing around the campfire; the lake in blue evening light; children on the beach; candles on the labyrinth; our ingathering web.

Many people gave of their time and expertise to make this retreat so satisfying. I want to say their names and thank them for their contributions.

**John Palmer and Glenda Malcolm**, thank you for being our registrars and making sure everyone had a room.  
**Rick Hardman**, thanks for being the retreat liaison and making sure we all had workshop space. Thanks also for being MC for the talent show.  
**Lindsay Atkinson-Smith**, thank you for leading the labyrinth walk, conducting the Equinox Ritual on the beach, and leading the workshop "**Connecting Through Pagan Practices ~ The Four Elements - earth, air, fire and water**". Your gentle balance is very healing to be near.  
**Gwen Steele**, thank you for the workshop "**Connecting Through Gardening**". Your expertise and passionate care for the Earth are gifts we dearly value.  
**Sterling Haynes**, thank you for giving us "**Connecting Through Haiku**". Driving up and back on Saturday to share your skill with words was above and beyond!  
**Judy Kent**, thank you for offering the busy, dynamic, intergenerational workshop "**Connecting Through Art - Artists Trading Cards**". I think we need an art show, some of these pieces were absolutely amazing.  
**Rev. Linda Weaver Horton** did her usual creative best and offered an Intergenerational Workshop called "**Connecting Through Movement**", as well as an ingathering activity that wove us together in a multi-coloured web, and a wonderful worship service that pulled together the events of the weekend and the elements of the earth. Thank you **Linda** for all of that and for teaching folk dances, organizing music for the choir, trouble-shooting childcare, supporting the youth, and supporting me.  
**Simonne Macklem**, thank you for the gentle, energizing, grounding **Connecting through Circle Dance**.  
**Lloyd Horton**, thank you for teaching folk dancing with Linda.  
Thank you **Hajime** for early morning **Qi Gong/Tai Chi**. Your beautiful dancing adds a much appreciated element of spiritual practice to the weekend.  
**Fae Shaw**, thank you for organizing the wiener and marshmallow roast in the evenings. It wouldn't be camp without a wiener roast.  
**Sandra Bonar**, you deserve a medal for stepping in and directing the choir, thank you.  
Thank you **Lois Biescher** for the "**Stories of Sacred Earth Connections**" (I particularly liked that dust mite monster). Thank you for your flexible creativity in making the children's program fit with the ages of those who showed up (including unexpected teens) and for offering a much appreciated listening ear.  
**Sharon Sebo**, thank you for taking care of the littlest children and making do so graciously with such limited supplies.

That's a lot of people! And it doesn't even count all of you who just spontaneously helped in the moment. Thanks to folks who took time to sing in the choir, and those creative souls who offered their talents in the talent show, or were brave enough to share their haiku and movement meditation to enrich our time together. Thank you everyone. Thank you for everything. The weekend was fun, it was grounding and entertaining and spiritual and educational. It gives another rich layer and texture to my beloved community. Let's do it again.

Namaste,  
Marilyn

**Ps Glenda Malcolm** took some beautiful photographs. Check out **Photos** on our website. Thanks Glenda, you captured the setting and the sense of community perfectly.

**A warm thank you from the Family of Clarence Brown to all who helped to make the celebration of his life so meaningful by speaking, bringing food, singing and other contributions.**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP:**

I am pleased to report to the membership that all the necessary paperwork has now been completed so that the Unitarian Fellowship's name now appears along with Rob Brownlie's on the ownership papers of Rob's Brownlie's home. This is a most generous gift that we have received from Rob.

On the flip side of our financial coin we have incurred some unexpected costs that affect us negatively.

Firstly, we have had to give notice to our tenant who has been renting our home at 571 Cawston Avenue. Because of this, we anticipate that we will incur a loss of rental income of one or two months.

There have also been Property Transfer Taxes as well as legal costs for both ourselves and Rob Brownlie regarding the property transaction.

And finally we have had higher than anticipated interest charges for this year on the church's mortgage.

So, while we will have a substantial asset to add to our Balance Sheet we also anticipate that we will experience losses on our Operating Statement at the close of this year.

Because it has been necessary for us to draw \$5000.00 from our savings, to meet these costs, the board felt that the membership should be aware of this.

I am available at 768-6959 should any of you wish to discuss this.

Sincerely  
Louise McKenzie, Treasurer

### **Simplicity Circle Meeting**

Simplicity Circle will meet on Friday, November 9th at 6:00 in the lower level of the Church. Bring some simple food to share. We will discuss Simplicity Circle's involvement in the Green Sanctuary project. Everyone is welcome!

### **Calling all Circle Dancers**

Our next dates for Circle Dance are November 18 and December 9, 7PM in the Knights Room of Columbus Villa, 1920 Richter St. Ring 102 for entry. For more information Call or email Simonne. (764-9539 or [sagebush@telus.net](mailto:sagebush@telus.net))

### **Post-Haven Group**

If there are any members of our community that have ever attended the Haven on Gabriola and taken courses there, you might be interested in knowing we have formed a "post-Haven" group to meet and practice some of the principles that we learned at the Haven. Contact Sandra [san005@silk.net](mailto:san005@silk.net) or 491-9004 for more information.

### **A Volunteer opportunity!**

Do you have an hour or so on Thursdays or Fridays and an interest in seeing that our congregation knows about social action and other events in the church and beyond? We'd love to see a half-page insert in the order of service on Sundays that would give the particulars of up-coming events, so that folks would have them in hand to take home, and we could tighten up oral announcements that most of us have trouble remembering. Even twice a month would be a great help! Please let Amanda know in the office if you are interested.

Harry Sevier has nurtured the **Unitarian Book Club** for more than 12 years and is now retiring from its leadership. On Sunday, Oct.21, Harry and his wife Gillian were recognized for their dedication to good reading and their encouragement of intelligent discussion of the many and varied books read over the years.

**Two exciting monthly initiatives need a small team of “champions.”**

A Friday night **“Soulful Sundown”** aimed particularly at young adults (though we are all welcome), and a **“Philosopher’s Café”** that would feature a speaker and discussion of interest to kindred folks outside of our congregation (this might meet at a coffee house or other neutral location). If Soulful Sundown catches your interest, contact Mary Lou J. The Philosopher’s Café is still embryonic, but Rev. Linda or Marilyn R. would be happy to hear of your interest. We need a small group to research it a bit before we attempt it – a number of U\*U congregations have sponsored them elsewhere. We’d like to launch these outreach activities in January!

**A huge THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the yard sale!!**

To all those who helped set up, contributed food, priced, used their vehicles to haul stuff, cashiered, floor walked, counted money, helped in the kitchen, cleaned up, brought in good stuff, bought stuff, spread the word around and everything else, we are very grateful. We are especially grateful to Jill and Bruno Kurth, Lloyd Horton and Cathryn Wellner who plunged in to contend with the plumbing emergency. You are awesome!!

As you can see, the yard sale is a big undertaking. It's an important part of our fundraising efforts for the church plus it helps get a lot of goods reused. We made a bit over \$1,800. We had loads of fun and hope you did also. Getting to know more of the members and friends of our congregation was a bonus.

We would really like to have your feedback as to how we could make our operation run even better. Thank you to everyone and remember to get ready for our next yard sale to be held in six months.

Your yard sale committee:  
Rick Hardman, Gwen Lowe, Audrey Pekrul and Gwen Steele

**Dates to Remember**

**October 31** - Samhein ritual 7pm

**November 2 – 4** - Fall Gathering

**November 4** – New “U” (history) after the service

**November 5** - Meditation Group 5:15

**November 7** - New “U” class 7pm

**November 9** - Simplicity Circle

**November 10** - Canvass Dinner/Auction

**November 11** - Ajahn Sona speaks at UFK

**November 18** – New members service

**November 18** – RE Planning Meeting

**November 23** - Buy Nothing Day

**November 25** – Green Movement Service

**November 25** – Xmas pageant casting

**December 2** – Xmas gift making workshop